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U.S. Department of the Interior

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(A part of Waterton-
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NPS Intermountain Regional Director Reissues Record of Decision *Lake McDonald/Park Headquarters Wastewater Treatment System Overhaul Begins in 2002*

WEST GLACIER, MONT. – Karen Wade, Intermountain Regional Director for the National Park Service in Denver, Colo., recently reissued a Record of Decision (ROD) for Glacier National Park's Lake McDonald/Park Headquarters Wastewater Treatment System. The new ROD was signed Friday, January 25th.

According to John Kilpatrick, Glacier's Chief of Facility Management, "The ROD was reissued to gain efficiencies by eliminating the need for winter operation of the sewage treatment plant during low volume months and thereby reducing overall operating costs of wastewater treatment." According to Kilpatrick, this decision not only eliminates the need for winter treatment plant operation and associated effluent disposal via well injection, but it also expands the system's storage capacity and reduces annual operating costs approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year. Increased storage capacity will also provide backup protection if wastewater-processing interruptions occur during the main operating season.

"The goal of this project continues to be the rehabilitation of the existing wastewater treatment facility to provide a technically-advanced system that minimizes impact to the environment while serving the park for at least the next 20 years," he said.

This option was initially reviewed and considered in the EIS, but was not chosen due to consideration for an expanded year round system. "When it became apparent that operational efficiencies could be maximized, we felt it prudent to reevaluate our decision," noted Kilpatrick. "Ultimately, this new decision allows for the addition of wastewater storage capacity in the immediate vicinity of the existing facility. Additional storage capacity, in turn, eliminates the need for year round operations, thereby, affording long-term savings without affecting the quality and level of water treatment," he added. Elimination of wintertime plant operations will also allow for cost-efficient, safe preventative maintenance to be performed when the treatment plant is not operating in the off season.

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The effluent discharge treatment was first selected in response to public comment received for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the *Lake McDonald/Park Headquarters Wastewater Treatment System Rehabilitation*. During late spring, summer, and early fall when the sewage treatment plant may treat up to 250,000 gallons of waste per day, effluent treatment will meet standards set forth by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality for surface water discharge. The revision eliminates any need for disposal of winter-generated effluent by ozone disinfection and direct well injection. Instead, all winter-generated sewage will be stored in sewage lagoons and processed each spring. Then the sewage treatment plant will be started up to process stored sewage and disposal of effluent will occur via spray field irrigation where vegetation cover will subsequently absorb any residual nitrogen and phosphorus.

Released to the public in 2000, the EIS analyzed five alternatives to rehabilitate the existing wastewater treatment system which was built in the early 1970's and currently serves the west side of Glacier, including park headquarters, Apgar, residences, campgrounds, Lake McDonald Lodge, and businesses. The Final EIS and ROD was signed in May 2001.

Construction of the new wastewater treatment facility is expected to begin in 2002 with completion of the facility projected in 2003.

The Final EIS and reissued ROD are available at public libraries as well as on the Internet (www.nps.gov/glac/whatsnew/planning.htm).

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